



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow

SEPTEMBER 19, 2002
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KC MAN CHARGED IN MANUFACTURE OF 'DATE RAPE' DRUG; LOCAL ARREST PART OF NATIONAL OPERATION WEBSLINGER

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Kansas City man was charged in federal court today with conspiring to manufacture GHB, an illegal date rape drug. Today's arrest and criminal complaint is part of the nationwide Operation Webslinger investigation that targeted the illegal Internet trafficking of "date rape" drugs and resulted in 115 arrests in 84 cities across the United States and Canada.

Chad G. Holte, 29, of Kansas City, Mo., was charged with conspiring to manufacture gamma hydroxybutyric acid (GHB), a controlled substance, according to the criminal complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Kansas City this afternoon.

An affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint alleges that **Holte** illegally imported gamma butyrolactone (GBL) from Canada, which he ordered from an Internet Web site, for the purpose of manufacturing GHB.

GBL is a GHB analog, meaning that it has a similar chemical structure to GHB. GBL metabolizes into GHB when ingested, Graves explained, and can be used in the manufacture of GHB. Although it is available legally as an industrial solvent used to produce polyurethane, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, and other products, federal law prohibits the sale of GBL for human consumption.

Graves explained that GHB, which is odorless and colorless, can cause drowsiness, dizziness, loss of consciousness, and loss of inhibition. "This drug is particularly insidious,"

(MORE)

OPERATION WEBSLINGER

Page 2 of 2

Graves added, "because it can be dissolved in beverages and used as a 'date rape' drug. It hurts the young women who are innocent victims, and we won't hesitate to use our authority to stop it wherever it can be found.

"This is one more example of sophisticated criminals moving to the Internet. Whether it's child porn or dealing drugs, our efforts today make it clear that cyberspace isn't a safe haven to break the law."

Law enforcement agents have been investigating the activity of a group of Web sites from which **Holte** allegedly purchased GBL, Graves said. During a 30-day period, Graves added, more than 1,520 orders for GBL and other analogs and precursor chemicals were placed on those Web sites. Those orders are estimated to be worth more than \$3 million.

Holte allegedly made five orders from one of these Web sites, Graves said. A search warrant was obtained for two of the five parcels mailed to **Holte**, which contained a total of six plastic 260ml bottles of what is believed to be GBL. On September 18, 2002, a controlled delivery of the five packages was made at **Holte's** residence. When **Holte** retrieved the parcels from his front porch, Graves said, law enforcement agents executed a search warrant and arrested him. **Holte** remains in federal custody pending a detention hearing.

Operation Webslinger is a two-year investigation that began as a result of increasing seizures of GBL as well as 1,4 BD, another analog. It represents law enforcement's most significant national operation targeting organizations trafficking in GHB, GBL, and 1,4 BD. Operation Webslinger is also the most significant enforcement effort targeting drug traffickers using the internet to buy and sell dangerous drugs and chemicals.

Operation Webslinger targeted individuals and organizations supplying large quantities of GHB, GBL, and/or 1,4 BD ordered over the Internet and delivered by the mail. From four primary investigations, agents developed leads that led to the identification and arrest of individuals across the country involved in buying and selling these drugs. All totaled, agents conducted enforcement operations in over 80 U.S. cities with drug seizures that could have yielded more than 25 million dosage units.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael S. Oliver. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow